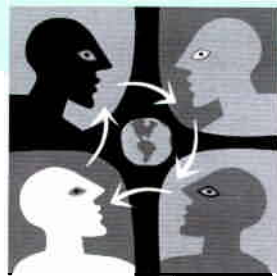


Vision, Alliance, Opportunities, and Accountability



Recommendations of the Governor's Task Force To Plan for Higher Education in
the Kennebec Valley

December 1, 2005

A Vision for Central Maine

The University of Maine at Augusta will be known as a Regional Baccalaureate Institution, which collaborates with the Maine Community College System and other University of Maine System campuses. The University of Maine at Augusta will reduce its associate degree academic program inventory consistent with its baccalaureate mission, the implementation strategies of the University of Maine System Strategic Plan, and the needs of the citizens of Maine.

History and Process

Governor John E. Baldacci established the Task Force on May 5, 2005, in collaboration with the Chancellor and Trustees of the University Maine System, to explore the broad educational needs of the central Maine region.

The Governor asked the Task Force to look at issues identified in Strategic Direction 8 of the University of Maine System Strategic Plan concerning the University of Maine at Augusta. The Governor asked the Task Force to work with all impacted communities, reflect on the full range of educational needs of the citizens and organizations of the region, and develop a plan for achieving quality, affordable, accessible higher education in the Kennebec Valley.

The Task Force met nine times. Throughout the process, public dialogue helped shape its research, reflection, and recommendations. It held five public forums in Augusta and Bangor, including a six-hour *Appreciative Inquiry* workshop in Augusta attended by over 60 interested citizens. The Task Force gathered extensive data to assist in the analysis of the long term educational needs of the region and the current capacity to respond to those needs. Reports received are available on the Department of Education Web site, www.maine.gov/education.

This is a consensus report of the Task Force. To fully serve the needs of and to meet the aspirations of the people and organizations of the region, educational opportunity must be expanded. This end is best served through greater collaboration rather than by changing the governance of the University of Maine at Augusta or any of the other institutions in the region. This moment also represents an opportunity to be creative, to control administrative costs, to build new models of program development, and to create an educational delivery network that speaks more to the next century than to the last.



Economic Research

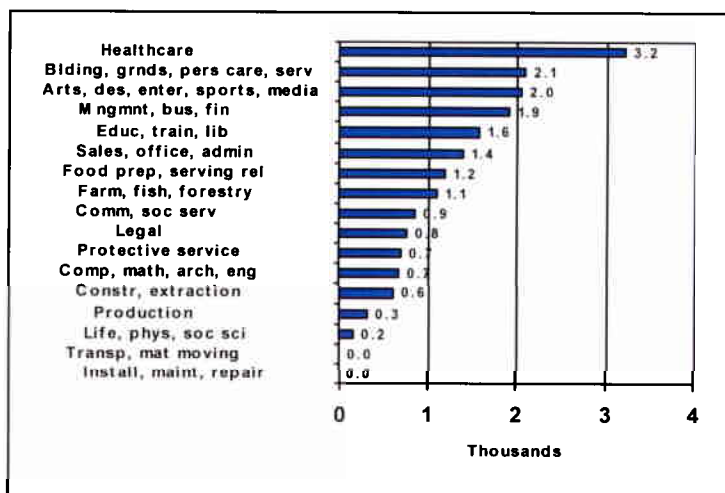
The future of higher education institutions in the Kennebec Valley must be considered in light of economic growth in the area, particularly the types of jobs that will be needed given the areas of specialization anticipated in the region.¹

According to research conducted for the Task Force, in the Kennebec Valley, the largest amount of jobs by occupation is in sales, office administration, and personal and building services (32% of employment in the region). The largest number of jobs by industry is in health care and social assistance, with retail trade second, and state government third.

Kennebec Valley's distinct occupational characteristics when compared to the rest of Maine can be seen by looking at employment specialization. Community and social service jobs are twice the level in Kennebec Valley as in the nation and slightly higher than in Maine overall.

Forecasted growth rates for occupations in the Kennebec Valley show changes in job types over the next 10 years. The largest growth rate is in healthcare employment followed by building and personal services and arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations.

Kennebec Valley institutions of higher education must meet two challenges. First, they must meet the needs of residents for the broad benefits of higher education. In the region and throughout Maine, higher education must be primarily about the individual



Growth Rates for Occupation Types in Kennebec Valley 2005-2015

and his or her chance for a better life. Economic success occurs when individuals' needs are met so that they successfully complete higher education. Second, the region's higher education institutions must address the needs of specialized segments of the area economy to provide a further foundation for the region's economic growth.

¹ This section is taken directly from research conducted for the Task Force by Charles S Colgan and Kenneth C. Young in *Economic Growth and Development in the Kennebec Valley and Implications for Higher Education*, September 2005.

Financial Context

The Task Force considered the financial implications of its recommendations. These are not yet readily quantifiable, but offer potential for savings.

- **Background:** A key concern of the University of Maine System Strategic Plan is the emerging financial challenge facing all universities in the system. The Strategic Plan identifies these opportunities for administrative savings through efficiencies at all campuses, regardless of structural models chosen:
 - ◊ Greater use of technology and information systems
 - ◊ Shared administrative services
 - ◊ Strategic procurement
- **Merger Model:** The Strategic Plan proposal to merge the University of Maine at Augusta and the University of Southern Maine seeks to meet the emerging needs of central Maine and its students through changing business practices. From a purely financial perspective, a UMA/USM merger has advantages not fully offered by a partnership/collaboration:
 - ◊ Common leadership
 - ◊ Economies of scale
 - ◊ Periodic accreditation savings
 - ◊ Reduced start-up time and costs for new program offerings
- **Partnership/Collaboration Model:** A partnership/collaboration model offers many of the financial advantages found in the merger and responds to non-economic considerations over a merger model through:
 - ◊ Closer ties to communities served
 - ◊ Increased responsiveness to student needs
 - ◊ Additional possibilities for multiple graduate degree partners
 - ◊ Improved use of resources through enhanced collaboration and cooperation with the Maine Community College System

The Bottom Line: Both the partnership/collaboration and merger models offer opportunities for resource efficiencies not currently available.



Our Recommendations

Recommendations of the Governor's Task to Plan for Higher Education in the Kennebec Valley

Vision

1. As it moves forward implementing its Strategic Plan, the University of Maine System Board of Trustees adopts the Task Force's vision for the University of Maine at Augusta.
2. The University of Maine at Augusta remains an accredited university within the University of Maine System, moving toward becoming a regional baccalaureate institution. The University of Maine at Augusta continues to provide administrative and academic oversight to University College at Bangor.
3. Possible sources of additional funding needed for the University of Maine at Augusta to achieve the Task Force's vision are:
 - a. cost efficiencies realized by the University of Maine at Augusta re-invested in the University of Maine at Augusta as called for in the University of Maine System Strategic Plan;
 - b. University of Maine at Augusta internal reallocation of resources;
 - c. University of Maine at Augusta enrollment growth;
 - d. increased state general fund appropriation pursuant to strategic investments in Maine higher education generally;
 - e. regarding any new state funding, reconsideration of the University of Maine System funding formula already instituted as part of its Strategic Plan; and
 - f. University of Maine at Augusta development fundraising activities throughout central Maine.

Alliance

4. The Central Maine Alliance for Higher Education is established by the University of Maine System and Maine Community College System Boards of Trustees. The Alliance will initially include the University of Maine at Augusta, University of Southern Maine, Kennebec Valley Community College, Eastern Maine Community College, and University of Maine.
5. The Alliance shall collaborate on quality, accessible, affordable higher education in central Maine through:

Our Recommendations (cont.)

- a. creation of the Alliance structure through an inclusive, strategic implementation process engaged in by the University of Maine Board of Trustees and Alliance institutions;
- b. brokering of selected master's program offerings at the University of Maine at Augusta (UMA and USM will be the primary partners);
- c. planning for providing associate and bachelor degree education in the region;
- d. coordinating program and services planning and development through:
 - i. a formal coordinating group including the University of Southern Maine and Kennebec Valley Community College as the University of Maine at Augusta's primary partners in Augusta;
 - ii. a formal coordinating group including the University of Maine and Eastern Maine Community College as the University of Maine at Augusta's primary partners in Bangor; and
- e. consultations with private institutions of higher education in central Maine about possible collaborations.

Opportunities

6. In conjunction with the University of Maine System Strategic Plan regarding distance education, the Alliance shall explore establishing a Center for Teaching Excellence for Distance Education at the University of Maine at Augusta with a focus on faculty and program development.
7. The Alliance shall use faculty, student, staff, community, and business advisory groups to explore the full range of program needs in central Maine, to include identifying needs for these programs: associate, baccalaureate, master's, licensure, certificates, professional development, and non-credit.

Accountability

8. Consistent with standards established by the University of Maine System and Maine Community College System Boards of Trustees, the Alliance shall establish performance measures and report on progress to the University of Maine and Maine Community College System Boards of Trustees.

